

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /069 W

-----095310 270928Z /20

P R 270826Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4748

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5318

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: EXPLOITS DIVISION IN CATHOLIC CHURCH

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ROKG HAS MADE AVAILABLE TO CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC PRIESTS A DOCUMENT SEIZED AT A SEMINAR ORGANIZED BY MISSIONARIES. CONSERVATIVES (AND SOME MODERATES AS WELL) FOUND THE DOCUMENT INSULTING TO THE KOREAN PEOPLE AND HAVE BEGUN A CAMPAIGN OF RECRIMINATION AGAINST FOREIGN MISSIONARIES WHO HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF KOREA. END SUMMAR.

2. RECENTLY, MARYKNOLL SPONSORED A SEMINAR AT JESUIT-RUN SOGANG UNIVERSITY. A MARYKNOLLER WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SEMINAR CHOSE AN ARTICLE FROM "IMPACT" MAGAZINE AS ONE OF MANY PAPERS TO BE CONSIDERED IN DISCUSSIONS. ARTICLE IMPLIED KOREAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DUE IN GREAT PART TO PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION. ARTICLE WAS REPRODUCED IN 35 COPIES BY A MARYKNOLL BORHTER UPON DIRECTION OF PARTICIPANT WHO CHOSE MATERIAL. ALL COPIES AND ORIGINAL WERE SEIZED BY ROKG AUTHORITIES AT SOGANG BEFORE THEY WERE DISTRIBUTED.

3. ROKG EVIDENTLY REALIZED THAT ARTICLE WOULD BE JUDGED INSULTING BY MANY KOREANS AND MADE IT AVAILABLE TO SOME CONSERVATIVE KOREAN PRIESTS. ARTICLE PRODUCED EXPECTED
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REACTION, AND "SENIOR PRIESTS GROUP" WAS SET UP TO DEMAND EXPLANATION OF INCIDENT BY JESUITS AND MARYKNOLL. JESUITS APPARENTLY WERE SUCCESSFUL IN CALMING SENIOR PRIESTS BY ACKNOWLEDGING SCURRILOUS CHARACTER OF ARTICLE AND DENYING ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS APPEARANCE AT SOGANG. MARYKNOLL APPARENTLY WAS UNABLE TO USE THAT TACTIC WITH SENIOR PRIESTS PARTLY BECAUSE SOME SENIOR PRIESTS EXPECTED MARYKNOLL

SUPERIOR TO DISSOLCIATE ORDER FROM ANY CIRITCIAL REMARKS EVER
MADE BY MARYKNOLLERS ABOUT KOREA, INCLUDING THOSE OF FR.
JAMES SINNOTT.

4. MARYKNOLL DOES NOT FEEL RESPONSIBLE AS A SOCIETY FOR
ATTEMPTED USE OF ARTICLE AT SEMINAR SINCE USE WAS NEVER
CLEARED WITH SUPERIOR OR OTHERS IN AUTHORITY. MARYKNOLL
DOES NOT SUBSCRIBE TO CHARGES MADE IN ARTICLE - INDEED,,
(943- 7034894, FR. CORCORAN, WHO SAW MATERIAL ONLY AFTER
INCIDENT, REMARKED THAT ARTICLE HAD LITTLE MERIT. ESSENCE
OF PROBLEM IS THAT MARYKNOLL NOT IN POSITION TO CONDEMN
REMARKS CRITICAL OFROKG BY INDIVIDUALS OR TO TAKE PUBLIC
POSITION THATALL ANTI-ROK CRITICISM UNJUSTIFIED.

5. FR. CORCORAN TOLD EMBOFF HE BELIEVES PRESSURE ON MARYKNOLL
DUE TO LOOMING ANTI-MAERICAN ATMOSPHERE IN WAKE OF TROOP
WITHDRAWAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND BY ROKG DESIRE TO USE FRIENDLY
WING OF CATHOLIC CHRUCH TO FLAY MORE LIBERAL CHURCH ELEMENTS.
FR. CORCORAN'S STRATEGY IS TO REFRAIN FROM PUBLIC STATEMENTS
OF ANY KIND AND HAVE MARYKNOLL TAKE LOW PROFILE UNTIL HEAT
BLOWS OVER.

6. COMMENT: UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, MARYKNOLL'S LOW PROFILE
STRATEGY IS PROBABLY BEST COURSE OPEN. THE ROKG HAS ALWAYS
BEEN ALERT TO OPPORTUNITIES TO PLACE PROGRESSIVE CHURCHMEN
ON THE DEFENSIVE. THE "IMPACT" ARTICLE WAS IDEALLY SUITED TO
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EXPLOITATION ALONG THESE LINES AND THE TIMING OF THE ROKG'S
RELEASE OF THE ARTICLE TO THE "SENIOR PRIESTS" WAS PROBABLY
RELATED TO THE DATE OF SEIZURE RATHER THAN ANY SPECIAL
CAMPAIGN PLANNED BY THE ROKG. WE HAVE NO INDICATIONS THAT
THE ROKG PLANS PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED
IN THE INCIDENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DOCUMENTS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SEOUL05318
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770228-0793
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770614/aaaaamil.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a353da75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2021989
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EXPLOITS DIVISION IN CATHOLIC CHURCH
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, PINS, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a353da75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009